

It is a breach of the public trust to have Sinclair Broadcasting Company force its 62 television stations to air -- via free public airwaves -- a blatantly partisan program just days before the presidential election.

The fact that is intended to be run commercial-free raises the question whether this loss of advertising revenue does not also constitute an in-kind contribution whose purpose is to defeat the Kerry campaign for president. It is unconscionable to use the public airwaves in this way.

This is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation. When large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line (indirectly on this occasion, in the form of future political favors) and less of what we need for our democracy. We need to see local community content and substantive news, not the pet programs of a corporation furthering its own self-interest at the expense of the public interest.

Sinclair's actions show how important it is to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. The license renewal process needs to be taken seriously, with significant public involvement.

Thank you for considering my concerns.